

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04689 141247Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAA-01 SES-02 SSM-03 IO-13
EB-08 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 /099 W
-----087380 141249Z /53

O P 141208Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9215
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION: AUGUST 14, 1978 - 1400 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 4677 (DTG 120732Z AUG 78)

1. CEASE-FIRE HOLDING.

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04689 141247Z

A. THE SYRIAN/RIGHTIST CEASE-FIRE AGREED UPON AUGUST 9 IS
GENERALLY HOLDING. DESPITE THE SHELLING ON THE NIGHT OF AUGUST
11, THERE WAS LITTLE SHOOTING ON AUGUST 12 AND 13.

B. CHRISTIAN MILITIAS HAVE REDUCED THEIR VISIBLE PRESENCE IN
ASHRAFIYAH, AND THE SYRIANS HAVE EVACUATED THEIR POSITIONS IN
THE EASTERN PART OF ASHRAFIYAH, INCLUDING TWO NEAR THE NLP PARTY

HEADQUARTERS AND ONE NEAR THE HOUSE OF NLP PRESIDENT CAMILLE CHAMOUN. THE SYRIANS STILL MAINTAIN POSITIONS ON THE QARANTINA BRIDGE, AS WELL AS IN THE WESTERN PART OF ASHRAFIYAH, INCLUDING RIZK TOWER.

2. VIOLENT EXPLOSION IN FAKHANI.

A HUGE EXPLOSION DESTROYED A NINE-STORY BUILDING IN FAKHANI STREET IN WEST BEIRUT AUGUST 13. THE PRO-IRAQI PALESTINIAN LIBERATION FRONT (PLF) OCCUPIED THREE STORIES IN THE DEMOLISHED BUILDING AND FATAH TWO STORIES. ACCORDING TO LEFTIST AS-SAFIR, 96 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND MANY MORE WOUNDED. PLF LEADER ABU AL ABBAS, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH AP, INDICATED THAT AHMAD JABRIL'S PRO-SYRIAN PFLP/GC WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXPLOSION, AND THAT THE LATTER "WANTED TO ASSASSINATE ME AND THE MOVEMENT". THE PLO HAS FORMED A "TECHNICAL COMMITTEE" TO INVESTIGATE THE CAUSE OF THE BLAST.

3. HOSS LEAVES FOR LATAKIA.

A. PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS LEFT FOR LATAKIA ON AUGUST 14 TO MEET WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT HAFIZ AL-ASSAD. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS, HOSS WILL DISCUSS:

--A SECURITY PLAN FOR BEIRUT;
--THE LEBANESE ARMY BATTALION HALTED AT KAWKABA;
--RENEWAL OF THE ADF MANDATE.
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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04689 141247Z

B. ACCORDING TO PRO-SYRIAN ASH-SHARQ, HOSS WILL RAISE THE QUESTION OF CALLING A UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING TO DISCUSS SOUTH LEBANON, AS WELL AS THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE ON THE MATTER.

4. COMMENTS BY THE CHAMOUNS.

A. NLP LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN TOLD REPORTERS ON AUGUST 13 THAT HE IS OPPOSED TO RENEWAL OF THE MANDATE OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCES (ADF). HE PUBLICLY URGED PRIME MINISTER AL HOSS TO TELL SYRIAN LEADERS THAT THE GOL WOULD NOT RENEW THE MANDATE WHEN IT EXPIRES ON OCTOBER 27. CHAMOUN SAID THERE WOULD BE NO COMPROMISE ON THE MATTER.

B. IN A SIMILAR TONE, DORY CHAMOUN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NLP, DERIDED THE "SO-CALLED SECURITY PLAN" THAT HAS GONE INTO EFFECT IN EAST BEIRUT. HE SAID IT WAS MERELY AN ATTEMPT TO "COVER UP" THE RENEWAL OF THE MANDATE OF THE SYRIAN TROOPS HERE. HE CALLED FOR A GENERAL STRIKE "IN WHICH LEBANESE WILL EXPRESS THEIR TRUE SENTIMENTS."

C. TAKING A DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT TACT, NLP MILITARY COMMANDER

DANY CHAMOUN, IN A LENGTHY INTERVIEW CARRIED BY AN NAHAR ON AUGUST 14, SAID THAT RENEWAL OF THE ADF'S MANDATE WAS INEVITABLE. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE NUMBER OF SYRIAN TROOPS IN LEBANON HAD TO BE REDUCED TO ABOUT ONE-FOURTH THEIR PRESENT SIZE. (THEY NOW TOTAL ABOUT 30,000). DANY ALSO EXPRESSED A GREAT DEAL OF HOPE IN THE NEW SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR EAST BEIRUT. "WE DO NOT WANT TO FIGHT AND THE SECURITY MEASURES ARE SERIOUS." HE ADDED THAT CAMILLE CHAMOUN HAD AGREED TO THE MEASURES.

DECONTROL 10/14/78.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT04689
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780331-0963
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780865/aaaacbye.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f8138663-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 4677
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1741898
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION: AUGUST 14, 1978 - 1400 HOURS LOCAL
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f8138663-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014